



## **2010 South East Wales Regional Conference Report**

### **“Y Corff Llywodraethu Effeithiol” “The Effective Governing Body”**

On Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2010 the second regional conference for governors in the South East Wales area was held at the Christchurch Centre in Newport. The conference was organised in partnership by Governors Wales and Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen Local Authorities with the theme being ‘The Effective Governing Body’. Over 75 delegates attended the conference.

The conference was opened by Carol Sayce, Chair of Governors Wales. Mike Maguire, HMI delivered the keynote speech in the morning on “The next cycle of inspections”. Dr Brett Pugh, Director of Education, Newport City Council gave a presentation on “The Local Authority Perspective on the School Effectiveness Framework” in the afternoon.

#### **“THE NEXT CYCLE OF INSPECTIONS”**

Mike Maguire opened by thanking Governors Wales for inviting him to speak. He stated that Estyn were coming to the end of the current inspection cycle with the next inspection cycle commencing in September 2010. The new inspection framework was in line and complemented the School Effectiveness Framework. The objectives of his presentation were to:

- analyse the current strengths and shortcomings of the work of governors;
- to inform governors about the next cycle of Estyn school inspections; and
- to raise awareness of the involvement of governors in the next cycle of inspections.

Mike talked through some statistics from Estyn’s Annual Report 2008-2009 relating to how well governing bodies were fulfilling their responsibilities in the primary and secondary sector and also areas in which some governing bodies were not doing well.

The key proposals in the next cycle of inspection included:

- shorter notice period (4 weeks);
- more use of peer assessors (trained by Estyn);
- HMI-lead inspections;
- stronger role for self-evaluation;
- more learner involvement;
- simplified grading system (3 key questions rather than 7); and
- more accessible reporting.

Mike went into detail about the new 3 key questions in the new framework:

- How good are the outcomes?
- How good is provision?
- How good are leadership and management?

Key Question 3 would be linked to the work of the governing body and the inspectors will look at how well governors:

- understand their roles;
- are informed about schools' performance;
- provide a sense of direction;
- support as a critical friend;
- hold school to account for standards and quality;
- inform all parties re: procedures for making a complaint;
- ensure complaints are dealt with promptly.

Mike also stressed that importance of governors having a direct involvement in the school self-evaluation process during the next inspection cycle.

***This presentation is available to download from the Governors Wales website.***  
<http://www.governorswales.org.uk/publications/conference-reports/>

## **“THE LOCAL AUTHORITY PERSPECTIVE ON THE SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS FRAMEWORK”**

Dr Brett Pugh talked about the next step in the School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) would be building on the work local authorities were currently undertaking at the moment. His presentation would be based on what the South East Wales Consortia were doing. The SEF will become Wales' key policy for Education Reform and all other policies would be aligned to the SEF from September 2010.

He updated delegates on progress of the SEF and stated that it will be fully implemented within 3 years.

Dr Pugh talked about the use of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to secure school improvement as one of the central pillars to the success of the SEF. The PLC model is based upon teachers working together to share and develop professional expertise and knowledge that will positively impact upon student learning outcomes.

He talked about a website that was set up as a result of collaboration between the 5 LEAs within the South East Wales Consortium. The website gives examples of good practice of what clusters of schools were doing (<http://www.cpdsewales.org.uk/cpd/>)

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## WORKSHOPS

All delegates were offered the opportunity to attend two workshop sessions from a choice of four available options:-

- “Managing Complaints Effectively”***      lead by Steve Gullick  
All Wales Centre for Governor Training and Research
- “Health and Safety”***                              lead by Greg Price  
Torfaen County Borough Council
- “Performance Data Analysis”***              lead by Linda Thomas and Lindsay Lewis  
Welsh Assembly Government
- “Safeguarding and the ISA”***              lead by Astrid Davies, Nicola Mills and Cath Pickett  
Welsh Assembly Government

***Copies of materials used in the workshops are available to download from the Governors Wales website <http://www.governorswales.org.uk/publications/conference-reports/>***

## PLENARY SESSION

Delegates at the conference were given the opportunity to ask questions at the end of the conference. Questions and answers focused on:

- the family of schools data not being cascaded from the Headteacher to the governing body
- the language used in the inspection reports
- the general reluctance of governors to attend training and the various ways to overcome this
- the availability of a guidance leaflet for people wishing to become governors and what the role entailed.

## EVALUATION

Below are some of the comments received from the evaluation forms:

### **Organisation of the day:**

- Very clear and helpful
- I would rate the organisation excellent.
- Pack was excellent and appreciated – very thorough
- Thought it was an interesting day and a good opportunity to meet others from other schools and authorities. Good networking and thought provoking. Conference organisers very helpful on the day
- Excellent venue and resource provisions
- Lovely venue, treated with respect and courtesy, a lovely lunch and plenty to go round
- An excellent venue, most comfortable and convenient
- Clear package received on the day, thank you

**Speakers:**

- Excellent as new governor to find out what is going on in Wales as I work in education in England.
- 1<sup>st</sup> class presentations.
- 2 committed speakers. Speeches responded to many issues concerning Governors
- Offering varying views on situations which assisted in the value of the session

**Workshops:**

- Extremely clear & essential information
- Excellent presentation
- Well timed and approachable leaders
- Sessions professionally presented, with humour.
- Speakers clearly knew their areas
- Both workshops gave good food for thought on questions to ask and information to assess and be aware of.
- Very comprehensive – enjoyed but must take up at our associations

**Any other comments you would like to make:**

- Well worth attending
- Good conference. Excellent speakers. More interactivity in workshops.
- Registration was quick
- Very good conference venue. Good resources
- The plenary was however good because it enabled participants to raise other issues concerning governance